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Good morning Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I would like to express my support for SB 938
AN ACT CONCERNING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR STRIKING WORKERS

The pandemic and the subsequent tight labor market (and historically low unemployment) has begun to allow workers to assert their workplace rights. This has exposed the plight of workers in the American labor market, including inadequate wages, unmanageable schedules, unaffordable and insufficient healthcare and scandalously high CEO compensation.

Recently, employees across the nation have exercised their right to organize and, if the employer will not negotiate in good faith, to walk off the job. But deciding to go on strike is not an easy decision. Workers in a bargaining unit can strike only by majority vote, which generally happens after weeks of failed negotiations. It takes

extraordinary courage to strike; strikers can face losing wages, or losing their jobs or facing illegal retaliation when the strike ends.

Workers have to believe that the chance to achieve long-term improvements in pay, benefits and working conditions is worth the risk. SB 938 would lessen the economic impact on Connecticut striking workers by providing them with unemployment benefits after a two-week waiting period. Many frontline workers – after working hard and risking their lives during the pandemic - deserve substantial raises and improved working conditions. Unfortunately for too many employees this has not been realized.

SB 938 is not radical policy; it would align Connecticut's unemployment policy with that of two neighboring states. New Jersey¹ and New York² enacted similar legislation in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Thank you for hearing this important bill.

¹ https://www.nj.com/politics/2018/08/striking_workers_now_eligible_for_unemployment_ben.html

² <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/S4573>